

The INYO COUNTY NEWS-LETTER

A NEWS ALTERNATIVE - EASTERN SIERRA NEWS SERVICE

Compiled by John Heston and Benett Kessler

LIMITED CIRCULATION
Published weekly

Monday
Nov. 7, 1977

STANDOFF

VERBAL SHOOTOUT: INYO LAWYERS
AND PEACE OFFICERS EXCHANGE
SHOTS AT COUNTY BAR MEETING

"Putting a bad dog in a pen won't make him any better, but if he's there, he can't bite anybody." In those words

an Inyo County deputy sheriff summed up his (and many of his fellow officers') feelings about the "criminal justice system" in the county. And he said that his view "set the tone" of his meeting Monday with members of the Inyo County Bar Association.

Monte Yancey, president of the Inyo Deputy Sheriffs Association, had been invited to attend a regular meeting of the bar association following a broadside attack made against "criminal justice" in the county. Yancey said he attended the meeting to acquaint the county lawyers with the association's operation and goals.

But after his talk to the attorneys, the visiting deputy was met with indignant outcry and a rhetoric usually reserved for courtroom rebuttals. Some of the lawyers said that the existence of the association is in itself improper, and, in effect, that the police have no right to concern themselves with the penalties assessed in any crime.

Yancey had earlier announced his intent to go before the bar association in order to explain the aims and goals of his deputies' association, and their position. But after the Monday session the two groups appeared to be further polarized in any case.

At best, the lawyers offered patronizing statements about the peace officers, and, at worst, outright counterattacks. The lawyers who would agree to comment on the meeting - and these were very few - made it clear they "were not speaking for the bar association," but as individuals.

M.R. Ingalls, former Los Angeles police officer and police official, now a Bishop attorney, said he is "more or less" a spokesman (See STANDOFF, Insert Page "A")

SEWER PROJECT MESS

STILL UNFINISHED, BISHOP SEWER
PROJECT IS WRACKED BY DISPUTES,
LAWSUIT, AND CLAIMS OF WORKERS

With one lawsuit filed (see below), the troubled Bishop sewer project and its aftermath of unpaid workers and contractors appears to be heading more and more into the courts.

Trying to head off another lawsuit, two county deputy district attorneys have left for San Francisco and a conference with Contractor Joe Ramos around whom most of the issue seems to center.

Ramos, with a number of unpaid workmen and sub-contractors snapping at his heels, is demanding (and may get) more money from Inyo County. He claims that delays and setbacks in the early part of the construction are the cause of his own losses.

Already, Ramos has been paid an additional \$50,000 to cover his costs caused by delays. The delays came about when the department of water and power haggled over some rights-of-way on some land it owns in the sewer project area. He says he will now settle for another \$65,000 and upon payment will complete some unfinished portions of the job. Although they will not speak for the record, some officials feel that Ramos' demand - which covers some tangible necessities in the project - is not "too far off."

With some reluctance, the county may go along with the demand - (County Administrator (See SEWER PROJECT, Page 5)

INDECISION ON ELK

STILL UNDECIDED ON ELK SHOOT,
F&G CALLS IN THE HELICOPTERS

Armed with tranquilizing darts and carrying a "one-elk cage" hanging beneath their helicopter, State Fish and Game officers will move in on Inyo County's Tule Elk herd and cart 30 of the animals off to another rangeland. Said one spokesman for the department: "At least that's the way it stands now."

The elk issue was further confused last week with a story carried on the Associated Press wire, and circulated locally in the Los Angeles TIMES. The story said, in effect, that the fish and game people had abandoned their plans to shoot the elk and instead move them to a range site near San Francisco. Within hours of publication, however, a fish and game headquarters spokesman said that the "final decision" on the elk will be made "later." Joe Sheehan said he feared there might have been a misunderstanding between him and the AP reporter, so he called back, but the story was "already on the wire."

Sheehan said the department has been "under very strong pressures," as had the state secretary of resources, "and the governor's of- (See ELK, Page 5)

THUG

ON A BISHOP STREET, A TEEN-AGER
MUGS AN 80-YEAR-OLD WOMAN

Commenting on what appears to be Inyo County's first "mugging" incident in several years, the district attorney said, "It's an unusual crime up here, not a problem we've had."

The crime he made reference to was the incident at Bishop last week in which a 16-year-old boy approached 80-year-old Katherine Young walking on Academy Street, hit her in the face and stole her purse.

Officers and witnesses said the boy pulled on the purse but the elderly woman held on. The youth got away only after a strap broke. Some people in a car at a nearby intersection saw the youth and followed him around a corner. Chasing him on foot they caught him and took the purse, but the boy broke away only to be captured later. He was charged - as a juvenile, of course - with attempted robbery.

Ms. Young, sturdy octogenarian, was uninjured, "only shaken."

»»»» NOTES FROM B.K. ««« BENETT KESSLER

THE FUNNIEST T-SHIRT that I have heard about so far was seen at Independence the other day. It was worn by a girl and it said:

"A woman without a man is like a fish without a bicycle."

A lot of good solid truth there...

BEN and ENID ASHWORTH put effort, time and money into building the Inyo County Employees Credit Union. She worked for more than a year without pay, trying to keep it going, but between the bureaucrats and the people who don't repay their loans, the credit union finally collapsed. Happily, its 250-300 shareholders will get their money back. A lot of county employees are talking about how many people were helped by Enid's efforts; they say she went out of her way many times "to open up the credit union office" if they needed cash quick.

We're not taking shots at anyone, but a few of the bad loans were made to people holding responsible - and well-paid - jobs.

"BIG MONEY, LAND AND WATER PEOPLE" make up most of the membership of a little-known lobby-pressure-public relations group that is an arm of the department of water and power: "Water and Power Associates."

A reliable and informed media source in Los Angeles says WPA was formed almost immediately in 1971 when, as a public agency, the DWP had to stop advertising. So now it gets most of its news-space free, and through a news-letter published each month by WPA for a about a thousand readers. Water and Power Associates operates out of a small and unobtrusive office in a dumpy area of old downtown LA, but from its modest quarters manages to swing enough clout to hire a former governor to help it wage DWP's battles, and to launch a fleet of speakers for LA public and civic groups. WPA also includes in its membership a high official of the state chamber of commerce. And to answer all of this, Inyo County may - or may not - be able to field just one public information officer to tell Inyo's "side" of the story.

"ALL THE SUSPECTS" for many of Death Valley's resort thefts are back for the season. Inyo officers heard barely a rumble all summer long, but now the winter season has re-opened the resorts and officers are watching a number of seasonal employees long suspected in many thefts and burglaries. A NEWS-LETTER source privately said that some employees of the Harvey organization, and even "some" of the park service personnel may be involved in thefts in the area. Also closely under investigation: An increasing number of quick night-time, lights-off landings by aircraft, thought to be carrying "millions" of dollars worth of narcotics for pickup in the remote Death Valley flatland, and to be delivered into Nevada and Southern California. A favorite landing area: a point



just south of the Inyo line in San Bernardino county - but if the heat's on there, the pilots opt for an air-to-ground transfer further north in or near Death Valley. Officers are helped by "interested citizens" who notify them if a plane is heard at "weird hours."

A LETTER BUBBLING WITH THANKS for Lone Pine's hospitality. A party of 80 - 70 girls and 10 adults that make up San Bernardino's Girl Scout Troop #98 - had to break up a Whitney Portal campout thanks to bad weather in the Sierras, and the whole fourscore moved down to a Lone Pine school building. It happened months ago, but Troop #98 letter-writer Coral Scheron still remembers the "Trading Post" people and others who helped them "settle in" at the school for the rest of their camping week. Seventy girls? -That must have been a blast.

BEST RUMOR OF THE WEEK: A spokesman at the Mammoth Chamber of Commerce (who shall remain unidentified) said the Mammoth Mountain people had paid out \$10,000 to some weather experts to predict what the "snow season" is going to be like. One is said to have predicted "70% of normal snowfall," the other "140% of normal snowfall." The rumor was denied by a spokesman for the Mountain.

NEWS-LETTER'S subscription list has doubled in two weeks - and is still growing. And with our sincere thanks for that, we'll extend once again the hope that...the news in Your day will be good news..Every day.

Sincerely,

KNIGHT ISSUE

SUPERVISORS QUICKLY SIDESTEP THEIR FIGHT WITH THE PLANNERS

Last week at their meeting, the board of supervisors made quick work of their issue with the county planning commission. For several days they had been at odds with the commission over commission criticism of the board for its over-rides in the Dean Knight mobile home development. A commission resolution, however, was clearly there - on the board agenda - and had to be dealt with.

With two representatives of the Knight organization, one of them an attorney, in the boardroom audience, it went like this:

Chairman Herbert London: "Well, what about the planning commission requests?"

Long silence.

Supervisor Wilma Muth: "Since we just recently had a combined meeting and the opportunity was available to them...I would now like members of the planning commission here. They made accusations never brought up before. I would like to go over it point-by-point with the planning commission on an eyeball-to-eyeball basis."

More silence, broken finally by Supervisor Dick Engel's motion "acknowledging the receipt of the resolution from the planning

(See KNIGHT ISSUE, Page 4)

"MOON" IS LEAVING

AFTER NINE YEARS, THE BIRDENS
WILL CLOSE THEIR LONE PINE SHOP

To most who know him and do business with his shop at Lone Pine, he is "Moon." His real name is Andy Birden. He is generally regarded as a quiet, good-humored sort, the fellow who fixes most of the town's watches and clocks, but otherwise about whom not a great deal is known. "Moon" has never been a big "joiner," although he is known to participate, when asked, in most of the town's projects.



"MOON"



PAULA

What is generally unknown is the fact of his expertise in an old and honored craft, that of watchmaking. He came to the west coast some years ago and worked "several places." From Delano he came to Lone Pine nine years ago with his wife, Pauls, and they opened up "Moon Jewelers." Behind his work at Lone Pine lay 30 or 40 years' experience in an exacting trade.

As a boy in Chicago, "Moon" took an interest in clocks and found he could repair them. He went to school to master the trade and to learn the jeweler's business. Over the years, in places far beyond Lone Pine, his abilities have become well-known. Customers in St. Louis and Oklahoma, to mention two, send their work to him and to his small shop on Lone Pine's main street. "Business is good, and people have been good to us. I hate to be leaving," said Mrs. Birden.

But they are leaving town anyway. It was with some reluctance that "Moon" last week advertised his final "close-out sale," and they plan to leave the county sometime after December 1.

They will go to Carson City so that "Moon" will be near an eye specialist at Reno. Recent eye difficulties - bad news for anyone, and especially for a watchmaker - have made weekly treatments necessary.

After their move, he will continue working at his trade, and at a favorite pastime, the making and remaking of old clocks. Friends hope his "time" will be long.

REARRESTED

A WEEKEND ARREST PROMPTS
"INTIMIDATION" STATEMENT

Promising a get-tough attack on intimidation of witnesses in criminal cases, a sheriff's detective said Saturday that "anyone who is arrested gets the benefit of being innocent until proven guilty, and we have to prove he's guilty beyond any reasonable doubt. So we will not tolerate something like the intimidation of witnesses in this case or any case."

"This case" that Detective Monte Yancey referred to was that of Lone Pine's Thomas Council, or "T.C." as many call him. Council was back in jail Saturday, facing more charges after he was picked up on a "stakeout" on Whitney Portal Road. Officers said he was on his way home to a residence in the Alabama

TRANSLATOR LAWSUIT

COUNTY'S TV BILLS CALLED "UNCONSTITUTIONAL"

When they returned from a vacation, a "late charge" notice was in their Rovana mail box, and John and Wendy Betts started thinking about the county translator television system. Says Mrs. Betts: "We didn't feel that the county could force us to pay that charge, especially when there are people on that same street that weren't even being billed for using the translator system."

They filed suit against the county, asking the court for "an order determining that the enforcement practices used by the County of Inyo are unconstitutional."

The Betts' complaint is that "a few people" have to pay for "everyone's" use.

HOSPITAL PAYS UP

SOUTHERN INYO HOSPITAL SETTLES :
DWP WATER BILL CLAIM OF \$6000

The Los Angeles Caesar has collected his Southern Inyo Hospital tribute: \$6,000, part of which, as explained by an attorney, was "legitimate past-due bills," and much of which was due to the increased metered rates of the department of water and power.

Payment came after several conferences between Deputy District Attorney Gred James, lawyer for the defendant hospital, and the DWP attorney, Ed Schlotman. Loser or not, the hospital was lucky, or so its attorney suggests, to come out with the settlement it got.

The hospital had recently joined with the county government in a refusal to pay the exaggerated water charges, since the question of their legality is the center of another lawsuit filed by the county. But as the hospital attorney explained, his client failed to serve legal notice why it was not paying the charges demanded by DWP. About \$4000 of the amount had been put in a trust fund until the county's suit was settled.

James explained that, now, if the county wins its lawsuit, the hospital may be entitled to a rebate on its overpayment.

The department of water and power admits that metered customers in Inyo County pay a higher rate than do the same customers at Los Angeles. Their explanation: DWP and the city's legal minds haven't had time to move on a legal action to make them equal, and an earlier proposal to do so "got lost."

Hills west of town.

Council is now charged with intimidating a witness, although officers declined to furnish more details about the case, or to name the witness. The case had to do with the sheriff's recent drug sales investigation, however, an investigation that has resulted in other charges against Council. The suspect was to be arraigned today (Monday). Also pending against him: charges of possessing a billy club and sales of marijuana. Arrested last month, Council had been held on \$29,000 bail, but was released on his own recognizance. Some peace officers speculated that his earlier release "had something to do" with the recent attack on the county's criminal justice system and its apparent leniency. (See COUNCIL, Page 4)

FORUM

LETTERS AND COMMENT

Page 4

INYO COUNTY NEWS-LETTER

Nov. 7, 1977

NEWS-LETTER WELCOMES LETTERS AND COMMENTS RELEVANT TO PUBLIC ISSUES, AND WILL PUBLISH ON ITS "FORUM" PAGE THOSE THAT THE EDITORS CONSIDER TIMELY. DUE TO SPACE CONSIDERATIONS, LETTERS SHOULD NOT EXCEED 200 WORDS. VIEWPOINTS CONCISELY STATED ARE THOSE MOST LIKELY TO BE CHOSEN FOR PUBLICATION. ADDRESS YOUR COMMENT TO NEWS-LETTER, PO BOX 531, INDEPENDENCE.



"HARVESTING THE CROP": A VIEW ON THE TULE ELK

"It may not be that the Tule Elk are as 'endangered' as some would have us believe. It would be interesting to know, for instance, how many elk were killed in previous hunts, from about 1948-1958.

"Fish and Game started out with maybe a dozen in 1932, and then by the late 40's had 400-500 of them. At that time hunts were held on a name-drawing basis for those with valid hunting licenses who had made application.

"Some say 'Don't shoot the poor old Elk,' but the elk are eating themselves out of house and home. And it would be interesting to find out how many have been killed accidentally or purposely. If they hadn't been killed off somewhat there might be 2000 today. They can become a real hazard on the highway.

"They are just like the burros. Some have shot and trapped them, but their numbers aren't depleted. If there are no natural enemies, they will abound in numbers.

"I believe in 'harvesting the crop."

- Paul DeDecker, Independence

"VIALE BUSINESS DISTRICT": COMMENT ON AIRPORT PROPOSAL

"I am always fearful of moving a central business district. Bishop has a very viable and strong central business district now. The people have invested thousands of dollars in parking areas for the merchants, which has made a very healthy situation.

"Another commercial area, shopping centers and stores, would unquestionably hurt the downtown area, and annexing it would be folly. Once annexed, we would have to supply sewers and water, improvements such as paved streets, lighting, policing. I would approach something like this very cautiously.

"But if it were limited to light indus-

KNIGHT ISSUE, Continued

commission."

Supervisor Richard McDonald: "I can't deny that. I'll second the motion."

Engel added that the requests should be "tabled."

More silence, then a rapid turning to other pressing business.

In the audience were Loyd Knight, the brother of the developer, and Knight's attorney. They sat poised and watchful with a tense composure suggesting they were ready to spring into a fight, if it came to that. Later asked about the issue, Knight replied that despite the planning commission's claims, no supervisor had bought property in the mobile home project. "The supervisors have already approved the project. I think it's (a matter of) a lot of personalities. I don't feel they have anything to go on."

If they did, the board and the commission kept it to themselves last week.

try, I think it would be an advantage. It would enhance the income of the city, through sales and liquor taxes, bed taxes, and added taxes for the county.

"As for a truck route around the city, it could hurt very little.

"But not just trucks would use such a road. It would actually be a bypass, and that would definitely affect city business, as the tourists pass us by.

"That would affect our income, but I think sometime it will come.

"There is no way to develop other means of income (such as industry) since the land is controlled by DWP - 98%. The land is locked up. Some day Caltrans will try to put a bypass in. If Bishop were triple its present size, there would be no problem. In fact it would improve the traffic situation in Bishop."

- P.D. Cook, Bishop City Council

CENSUS

SOME WINDSTORMS AND "HEADACHES,"
BUT COMPLETION EXPECTED IN A WEEK

For census-takers trudging the desert-lands in the Inyo head-count, there exist the problems that to some degree have extended the county census more than a week beyond its estimated completion date: wind, dust, miners and recluses hidden in remote areas - and a large number of transients to be sorted out from the "residents."

Death Valley has so far provided the single greatest hang-up denying completion of the census.

The census supervisor, Beverly Veress of Sacramento, said the past week has provided a number of enumerator headaches. Beyond blowing dust and high winds was the problem of people living in travel trailers; although they will not believe it, they are considered "legal residents" - by law. Veress says she's still hoping to complete the count "within a week," saying that by then the call-backs will be finished.

For those interested in the census' final results, there will be a waiting period of several weeks. The supervisors' questionnaire which accompanied the census will be totaled here in the county, but the numerical count itself must come from Sacramento after tabulation.

The enumerators say they have met with willing cooperation in most cases - and even frequent hospitable invitations. Time and regulations prohibit personal socializing, though, and they move rapidly through their areas.

COUNCIL, Continued

On Monday (today), Council appeared before Justice Court Judge Don Chapman for arraignment on the new charge. This time, Chapman avoided an "O.R." release of the defendant and set bail at \$10,000. Council will appear Nov. 14 for a preliminary hearing.

SEWER PROJECT, Continued

John K. Smith summed up the general attitude when he said last week: "...go along, if we can get Ramos to finish the job without a lot of other garbage..." - but this time they say they "want it in writing."

The county administration concensus is that it may be cheaper in the long run to let him finish the project and avoid litigation, and Deputy DA Pat Canfield was authorized to draw up an agreement for Ramos to sign. But at least one supervisor, Chairman Herbert London, still has some doubts, pointing out that there has been disagreement from the start, and indicating that there may be more to the complex issue than meets the eye.

Additional money for Ramos is available; some left-over grant money from the project, so the supervisors won't be hurting by meeting Ramos' demand.

Canfield and another deputy DA, Greg James, were to get Ramos' signature and return with it in time for the board of supervisors meeting Tuesday.

ONE CONTRACTOR FILES SUIT

Meanwhile, workmen and subcontractors are raising a clamor to be paid. One of them, the firm of Nikolaus & Nikolaus, has gone to court to get \$99,890.17 for concrete and rock products it claims to have furnished for the sewer project. The company names Ramos, the Insurance Company of North America, the County of Inyo and various officials and individuals involved in the project, and in the financing of it.

Nikolaus & Nikolaus claims in its suit that "a sufficient amount of money due from said public defendant to said defendant Ramos" exists to make the payment, or, in manner of speaking, the firm has not been paid because Ramos has not been paid by the county.

The Nikolaus firm is one of several that have filed "stop notices" with the county auditor and treasurer - a way of notifying the county that their claims must be met before Ramos is finally paid off.

Some contractors have contacted Ramos, and one was told that he couldn't be paid and that "even when" he did get the money Nikolaus and Nikolaus would have to come first.

That raised the question in the minds of some as to whether there will be enough to go around once the contract is settled.

ELK, Continued

fice," pressures, as he explained, not to shoot the elk.

When asked how the department would make their transferral of the elk, a local F&G man, Vern Koontz, answered dryly: "With great difficulty." They'll go one at a time, tranquilized by a morphine derivative and - playing it safe - the drug will be one that is reversible if there are "any problems."

At this time, the fish and game department apparently want no dead elk on their hands to explain later to the "Committee to Preserve the Tule Elk."

What the dart-weilders will do about 63 more elk that overpopulate the valley herd, is still, as Koontz said, very much undecided. They'll worry about that after they move the 30 to other rangeland at Concord Naval Station.

"MIXED NUDE BATHING"

A COUNTY ORDINANCE: LAS VEGAS
YOUTH DISCOVERS THE "RAW" FACTS

Many of the county's moonlight "skinny-dippers" - and there are a large number of them - don't even know about it, but a Las Vegas youth discovered the hard way a county ordinance which prohibits "mixed nude bathing" appecifically at Tecopa Hot Springs.

A warrant was issued last week after Jean Paul Venant failed to show up for a preliminary hearing on a charge of "mixed nude bathing" and other charges filed by a county park ranger. When Venant - and presumably a female companion - were caught in the raw at Tecopa, the youth reportedly tried to escape in a van with which he first rammed the park officer's car. The van - and two credit cards found in his possession - turned out to be stolen, if the officer's report is correct.

There was no explanation as to why the companion was not also charged with the ordinance.

Venant was released and from Las Vegas called the court to say he had been in an auto accident and could not appear for lack of transportation.

The incident refocused attention on the county's - and California's - laws against public nudity and "indecent exposure." In Inyo and Mono Counties, with their numerous hot springs, nude bathing - or "skinny-dipping" - is commonplace, though few charges, if any, have been filed.

Some favorite "mixed nude bathing" spots: several "hot creek" areas in the two counties; warm spring-fed pools below Keogh's south of Bishop; "Dirty Sox" on Owens Lake; the hot springs areas of Saline Valley; and numerous others. In fact, so numerous, and remote, are the bathing places, the county's officers would be hard-put to cover them all - even if they felt it necessary. Their chief concern about the well-watered party spots: narcotics.

NEWS-LETTER'S "COMPLIMENTARY" LIST

Again this week a number of new names have been added to NEWS-LETTER's mailing list, and some others removed. It is the editors' hope to acquaint everyone in the county with the "alternative" news coverage provided in NEWS-LETTER. Each week about 200 new names are added, and about that many removed. To be sure you receive NEWS-LETTER every week, mail in your subscription today and join our rapidly increasing number of regular readers.

PLEASE SEND

INYO COUNTY NEWS-LETTER

FOR THE NUMBER OF WEEKS CHECKED BELOW.

☐ 50 Weeks \$32 ☐ 25 Weeks \$17 ☐ 3 Months \$9

SEND TO _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

☐ Payment enclosed ☐ Please bill me

BRINGING IN THE SKI BUCKS

IF WE'RE LUCKY, AND HAVE GOOD SNOW, THE SKIER WILL RENT EQUIPMENT, TAKE LESSONS, STAY AT A CONDO, DINE AT WHISKEY CREEK, DRINK AT THE RAFTERS, DRIVE A GAS-GUZZLER...AND MAYBE EVEN BREAK A LEG.

Should anyone doubt the piledriver impact of the "ski trade" on the Inyo-Mono economic base, it might be well to examine the figures disclosed this past weekend by a spokesman at the Mammoth Mountain resort:

On an "average Saturday" in "an average year," (Practically any year with snow), there appear almost overnight 12-13,000 skiers, not counting June Lake. Each of these will pay \$11 for lift tickets, or \$350 for a season pass (up \$50 over the 1976 season). And that's only the cost to get up where the snow is. For a skier without his own basic equipment, Heaven forbid, he will pay, if he's an adult, \$8 to rent the basics, and \$4 if he's 12 or under. If he owns his own stuff he has invested here or elsewhere from \$300 to infinity. In other words, the average skiing family of four may pay about \$24 per day for rentals.

For the beginner, at least a few lessons are advised: \$12 per day with a minimum of four sessions suggested to insure reasonable safety when one tackles Mammoth's steep slopes.

Unless the skier has brought along a camper, or an "RV," he'll need a place to stay. Even campers and "RV's" are notoriously cold and have no real "class," not among the apres-ski crowd and the old Sun Valley purists.

A place to stay? Motels at Mammoth can put up a family of four for a minimum of about \$35 a night. A condominium costs about \$40 to \$60.

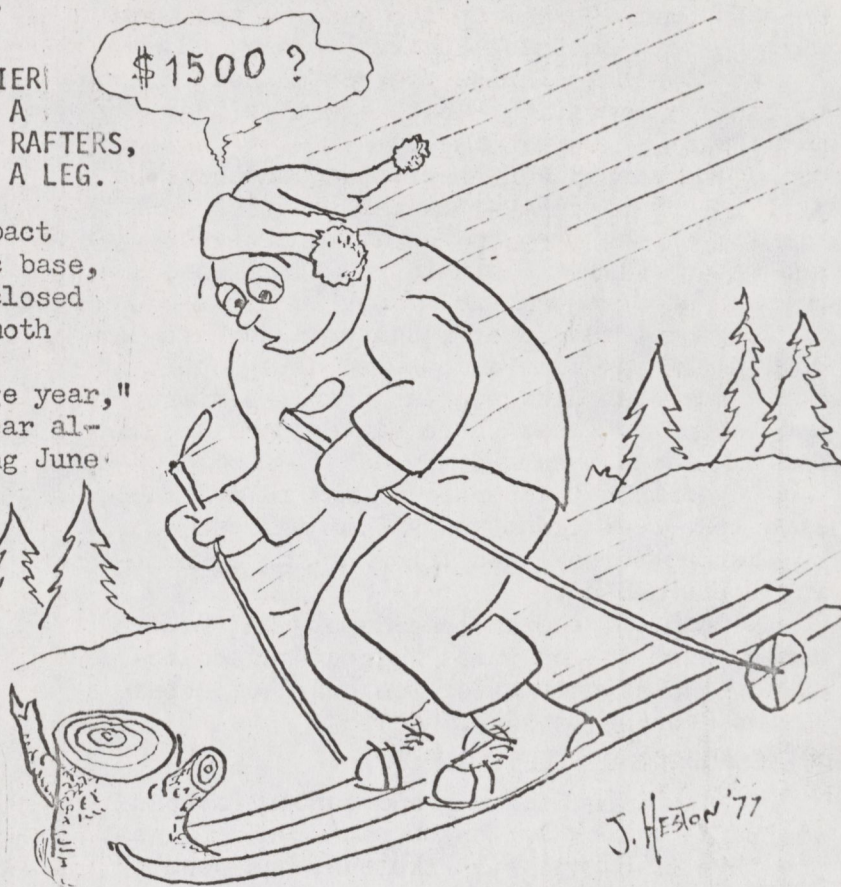
And then the mountain, once paid for and mastered and well-skied, has the unhappy faculty of creating hunger in its enthusiasts - and maybe even the desire for strong drink (\$1.50).

Dining at Mammoth is a matter of taste and pocketbook. There is a Hamburger Palace, and others of the popular "take-out" and fast-food shops, but the snob-appeal of the winter sport usually demands fancier fare: Dinner and drinks at the top places, "The Rafter's" and "Whiskey Creek," or maybe Alpenhof Lodge and its "Clock Tower Restaurant": For four, with luck, \$25 to \$40.

Except for dining and ski charges which remain the same, one may expect to spend less at mid-week.

For the locals who have friends at Mammoth or June Lake, the cost of sliding down a mountain on slats is always less. But most of the trade comes from down south. That means gasoline, sometimes tires and mechanics, and very often - towing, \$85. Gasoline alone for the average family car that goes from Los Angeles to the resorts and back: about \$25.

If you're lucky, you'll have some "good snow" for all this. Last year was terrible, but the skiing diehards came to the slopes anyway. This year, say the "experts," things will be better. Over the weekend, the sno-cats were out on the mountain packing down eight or ten inches that came down during small storms of recent days. Those precious inches will form



"(\$1500 and up)"...IN INYO-MONO AN ECONOMIC FACTOR

the base for what hopefully is to come.

Thanks to that little snow, Mammoth Mountain was "open" Saturday and Sunday. No lifts were operating, but "at least 10" hardy types were on the slopes anyway, trudging up the mountain for the chance of one or two quick rushes downward.

So what does it all mean to the economy? No one really has complete figures, but estimates run into the millions. And when it "doesn't happen," as in the past year, it has its reverse impact: Literally scores of ski resort employees either on welfare or getting unemployment checks.

So have a good season. Enjoy yourself. Bring dollars, folks.

And don't break a leg (\$1500 and up).

WINTER'S FIRST BLOW

A STORM FRONT MOVES IN EARLY TO RAISE DUST, DUMP SOME SNOW, CLOSE HIGHWAYS

For the mountains, snow, and for the valley, blowing dust so blinding as to cause at least one highway accident. The first wintry gale blew in over the weekend and, if projected forecasts are accurate, will quickly disperse, then be followed by next weekend another front moving southeastward from the Pacific Northwest.

So strong were the weekend winds, and so dust-loaded, highways were closed southeast of Olancho and between Bishop and Benton. At least one mishap was reported: a patrol car collided with a truck in Mono County, due to low visibility. Tioga and Sonora Passes, open and clear late in the week, were finally blocked by snow and closed. In some areas of Inyo and Mono, wind was clocked at 45 miles an hour and up.

A clearing-warming trend is expected at mid-week, but if an existing front moves this way, more "real winter" looms for the weekend.

STANDOFF, Continued

for a "number of attorneys." Said Ingalls: "I felt, and expressed the opinion, that the sheriffs as individuals and citizens had the right to express their dis-satisfaction with the system.

"But as a sheriff's unit, they are exceeding their responsibility. They are going beyond their responsibility which is arrest and producing evidence for court. The scope of their responsibility does not include concern with the penalty."

To Ingalls' comment, Yancey fired back. "We do have the right," he said, "the right to form an association and to express our opinions. The alternative would be to do nothing and we can't bring ourselves to do that."

Ingalls also charged that he thinks the association plans to endorse political candidates. "I told them," he said, "that they can't endorse candidates, not as a sheriff's unit."

To that, Yancey conceded that the association "is only interested in endorsing candidates who will keep the public informed on the justice system.

"It's for the public," he said. "We're not looking for personal benefits."

Yancey's was a claim that the deputies have stressed in their get-tough position on crime and their attack on what they called leniency in sentences handed down by Inyo courts and the low bail settings made in felony cases.

Few of the attorneys would give more than off-the-record comments on the deputies' press release more than two weeks ago. Efforts to get an official position statement from the bar association met with terse refusal, or, at best, some off-the-record epithets directed at the deputies. It was intimated privately by one lawyer that "Probably they're not saying anything because it would lend dignity to the deputies' claims."

The bar association president was finally reached late Monday, several hours after the bar association meeting. He was attending a bridge party at the Woman's Improvement Club in Bishop and his brief, impatient answer suggested the phone call was interrupting some heavy play. Said Bar Association President Charles Karpinski: "The lawyers are not happy about the deputies' association statement. Now I have 20 people here. Good-bye."

Reporting on his meeting with the lawyers, Yancey recalled that Karpinski had "said something to the effect that he didn't feel the public was capable of understanding the court system." Yancey said he replied to that with the comment, "This is like people not being capable of voting, but they still have the right to vote."

Recalling further the incidents at the meeting, suggested that the officers are not for a minute buying what some of the attorneys told him... "that there are reasons why criminals commit crimes that the public isn't aware of, that policemen aren't in a position to see why people commit crime." Yancey said his reply to that was to the effect that "there is no better place to see the living conditions and upbringing of a criminal than from a policeman's point of view.

"But regardless," said Yancey, "the law doesn't say it's okay to steal if you're from

eastern sierra news service

878-2381

SPECIAL

INDEPENDENCE, CALIFORNIA

NEWSFEATURE INSERT

JOHN HESTON

BENETT KESSLER

"May the news in your day be good news every day"

doesn't say it's okay to steal if you're from a broken home."

Another Bishop lawyer, contacted late Monday at his home, was Ed Forstenzer who at one time had announced his intentions to seek appointment and election to the Inyo Justice Court bench, the office now held by Don Chapman. "I told Mr. Yancey," said Forstenzer, "that his organization is doing a dis-service to Judge Summers and to Judge Chapman who are performing an extremely difficult job and doing it with diligence and professionalism. These men are legal scholars whose credentials are beyond reproach, and now the deputies' association seems to imply they can do a better job than our local judiciary."

Still silent in the issue were those who came originally under the fire of the deputies and their press release. Pointedly absent from the bar association meeting were Judges Summers and Chapman, and County Probation Officer John Lee. Ingalls said the "judiciary and probation" had been invited to the meeting, but were not in attendance.

The deputies have announced their hopes of establishing a "court watch" in Inyo County, a system in which cases will be followed from arrest to final disposition and which will afford public exposure of sentencing procedures "from drunk arrests on up."

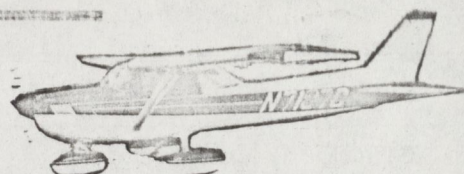
The deputies' group has set up a committee to contact other counties where the plan has been in effect.

Their plan is not a new one, and the idea of "follow-ups" on criminal cases has been implemented in areas (usually metropolitan) where there have arisen questions on the effectiveness of law enforcement. In some major cities organizations privately funded and called "crime commissions" have served that purpose, keeping tabs not only on activities of the courts, but on the law enforcement agencies themselves. Usually such programs, and their attendant publicity, have resulted in greater efficiency - and harder crackdowns on crime - in the areas they served. Dallas, Miami and Chicago are but a few examples. Such programs of necessity require the co-operation and active assistance of the local press which sometimes shows reluctance to print the name and sentence of every public drunk. Whether the Inyo officers can get that cooperation in the area they serve has yet to be seen, due, if for no other reasons, to space and time limitations. A similar plan in Nashville, Tenn., at one time caused the Nashville BANNER to print twice each week half-page sections listing decisions in area courts.

The deputies here, however, are hopeful that their program will bring "at least a little attention" to what they consider a serious problem of increasing crime - and decreasing correction or punishment.

If they get their way, they would, in effect, "temper all this mercy with a little justice."

In that, they have found some sympathy.



DOPE PILOTS OVER INYO

HUNDREDS OF DRY LAKEBEDS OFFER REMOTE LANDING FIELDS FOR FLYING NARCOTICS SMUGGLERS AND POSE INCREASING PROBLEMS FOR UNDERSTAFFED, UNDERFUNDED ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES.

If statistics are to be believed, and if the "profiles" of the policing agencies are correct, he's about 30 years old, has enough flying experience to make him "a hot pilot," enough education to make him "sharp," outgoing and even friendly. He has a sense of challenge and has developed even a certain camaraderie with many of those who pursue him, and he respects them and often has earned, in a grudging way, their respect.

If it's night-time he's flying without lights, and perhaps dangerously low - maybe even as low as 30 feet off the ground. He is tensely aware of the desert-mountain country around him and below him.

For his troubles he's earning at least \$10 a pound for the cargo he carries, and there may be upwards of a thousand pounds of it.

The payload is marijuana and he just may be flying over the San Bernardino County line and into a remote area of Inyo County, heading perhaps for one of the dry lakebeds of Death Valley. If he senses danger he may give a signal - just two or three pre-arranged touches on his microphone button - and then opt for another landing area: one of the 300 dry lakes in Nye County, Nevada, perhaps even a Sierra meadow if it's summertime. If they are "really on to him," and in pursuit in one of their highly sophisticated radar and FLIR-equipped Mohawks, he'll land practically anywhere he likes - smiling, since the load he carried could by then be scattered over miles of desert, dumped hurriedly, bale-by-bale out of the plane he flew. (Favorite: Cessna, with some modifications for space and fuel.)

But if luck is with him (and more often than not it is), he'll soon see the blink of a headlight and set her down. His load is so valuable that the plane becomes expendable; it may have been stolen anyway, so he'll set it afire after the load is transferred to a van or some other enclosed truck. He'll ride with his contact people to the nearest town and now, with his pocket fat with cash, he'll take it easy for awhile - until the next load and the takeoff from Mexico.

That, essentially, is the picture presented by customs agents and drug enforcement agency officers now faced with the most extensive narcotics smuggling operations in this country's history. Their efforts have shown some success in and near the border areas of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California. But now the smugglers are looking for landing areas further inland. Recent events have shown that the smugglers have opted for the remote deserts north of the heavy radar-watches of the south. On their flight maps are marked areas in San Bernardino, Inyo, Kern and Nye Counties. At least two damaged and burned aircraft have been investigated in recent months at Death Valley. As recently as Oct. 23, officers closed in on a dope transfer landing east of Victorville, and several other burnings have occurred over the line in Kern.

From his office in Tonopah, Sheriff C.J. Howard told NEWS-LETTER that in his area a-

lone there are about 300 potential dry-lake landing fields. He intimated that he is co-operating with other agencies "and anybody who wants to work with me" in locating and arresting the flying dope dealers. He suggested that even now there is some organized plan afoot in his department, but for obvious reasons declined to discuss it.

Sgt. Earl Bray of the Kern County sheriff's office, said officers there are investigating a recent burning near Taft - and its 1000-pound "grass" cargo. There was another landing near Kings County line, and "two others" landed or crashed and "haven't been found."

The four-county area is considered "ideal" for the smugglers: numerous remote dry lakebeds that are the "right distance" from Mexico when measured in terms of fuel.

The Tecopa area of San Bernardino's northern area provides some favored landing sites. Sheriff's Sgt. Gene Bowlin told NEWS-LETTER that recovered planes have been traced to Utah, Las Vegas, Colorado, and other places. They have found two abandoned planes and "at least two or three" burned planes.

Millions of dollars are involved in the operations. To offset the growing problem, the drug enforcement men, working with customs officers, have established borderland networks of radar, some of it mounted on mobile units for easy surveillance in areas the smugglers have thought "safe." And the customs men have also launched a few "hot pilots" of their own. Sometimes in pursuit they have literally had to swerve out of the way of marijuana bales hastily dumped from fleeing smuggler-planes. Under law, they cannot shoot down a smuggler unless they are fired on.

The officers say that slap-on-the-wrist sentences of those caught are "not yet" creating morale problems. Another problem for the officers: increasing public apathy and a decreasing concern for dope enforcement. Cocaine and marijuana are now largely accepted by the middle-class users. As a consequence, the agencies are undermanned and under-equipped.

There is no lack of concern in Inyo, however. Already, some citizens living in the Death Valley area have told officers they will report night-flying planes that are easy to hear in the relatively quiet desert. In the past year at least two mysteriously burned planes were found in their area, and officers turned over their investigation to the customs and narcotics people. The license or "N" numbers on the planes are always obliterated, which slows down the investigation.

The officers have some other help, too: Night-flying in mountainous areas is dangerous. A year ago, officers recovered the bodies of smugglers who crashed in a mountain lake. Hundreds of pounds of marijuana had floated to the surface, or no one would have known about the crash.

TWO WATERWAYS - an editorial

JOHN HESTON

THE PANAMA CANAL ISSUE AND THE LOS ANGELES WATER ISSUE, THOUGH FAR REMOVED, SHOW STRIKING SIMILARITIES IN BOTH ORIGIN AND EFFECT, AND IN INYO COUNTY PRESENT CONTRADICTIONS OF THOUGHT.

If one takes a street-corner survey in any Inyo community, he discovers quickly that most Inyo County people are FOR keeping the Panama Canal - by force of arms if need be. And if one takes another street-corner survey he as quickly discovers that most people of Inyo County are AGAINST ownership of their land by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power. Most want the land back in their own private hands - not yet by force of arms, although the demonstrated use of dynamite in Owens Valley poses some frightening possibilities.

Therein lies a paradox. A contradiction.

The canal, and the aqueduct, were projects born in, and of, this country's "Build-it-Build-it-big" era. It was a time of expansion, a time of local and national pride of accomplishment. Only in that day could anyone have applauded William Mulholland's stupidity: "There it is. Take it." In those days, no project seemed too large, too difficult for the newly-strong country flexing its muscles and parading its "White Fleet". And as it was in the nation, so it was in the then-nice-sized town of Los Angeles.

As we are bitterly discovering nowadays, "big" does not always mean "better." Now, looking back, we can see where some of the early century dream-fulfillers, long as they were on ambition, were short on foresight. Greed and opportunism, parading as patriotism and "progress," often blinded even the wisest.

Panama did not then exist; it was a rebellious province of Colombia. One need not go far into history and the record to see how the popular Theodore Roosevelt took advantage of the central American situation to build Panama and place it "in perpetuity" under The Flag. He turned Panama over to the United States which claims never to have indulged in "colonialism."

It was the same Roosevelt who just as eagerly turned over the Owens Valley to the City of Los Angeles, creating in Inyo County a government-within-a-government, or by any definition, "a colony."

In recent decades people everywhere have sought - and usually found - "self-determination." Great colonial powers have been reduced to tending to their own, sometimes trivial, affairs. "Colonialism" is a word used by East and West alike to convey the idea of the ill-use of one political entity by another.

Inyo County people are learning about "colonialism"; that a colonial power precludes or limits personal growth and self expression and corporate growth and economic good health in the area that it dominates. As it is in impoverished Panama, so it is in Inyo.

If we as Los Angeles "colonials" would deny the Panama Canal Treaty, then we must also support Los Angeles' continued domination over our lives here - if we are endowed with a sense of logic.

The two issues are traceable to the same roots, "our" canal and "their" aqueduct; they go back to the same kind of thinking and the greed that always looks like "progress" and sounds like altruism.

If we would deny Panama and the people of Panama then we must also admit that "Los Angeles bought and paid for it and it is their's." That is the weak claim of both these colonial powers, and we can't have it both ways.

Probably the best - and the safest - philosophy in all cases is self-determination for everyone - everywhere.



SEARCH AND RESCUE VOLUNTEERS were called out last week after a call from a Monterey Park police captain who reported that his son, 23-year-old Jim Lynch, and a companion, Russell Zitlau, were two days overdue from a hike above Onion Valley in the Sierras. On second day of the search, youths "found the rescuers;" and blamed their delay on a sports injury suffered earlier by Lynch. A "bum leg" slowed their return to the valley.

The COUNTY

THE COUNTY'S AIRPORT LEASES ARE STILL GROUNDED BY L.A. COUNCIL

Whatever their differences in water and land issues, the county administration and the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power continue - more or less - to "do business" in other matters, albeit with a certain ill-disguised mistrust on the part of each.

Their latest attempts at necessary contact have to do with the two county airports, at Lone Pine and Independence, and with a supervisors' proposal to get DWP to "help plan Lone Pine's future development," this latter including a suggestion that DWP sell some of its Lone Pine properties.

Some time back the county proposed several improvements for two airstrips, both located on DWP land and leased by the county. The planned improvements, however, can't get off the ground without the landlord's approval.

Although he fell short of demanding a groveling, hat-in-hand appeal, DWP's Jim Wickser said in a letter to the board of supervisors last week that the county will do well to check with DWP before it moves on its improvement plan. He pointed out that the Los Angeles City Council has not yet approved the county's new leases on the airstrips, and he gave no intimation as to when that might occur. Meanwhile, at least one city councilman, a member of the council's water and power committee, has already warned that the council is less than eager to act on county proposals until it gets some cooperation. Although the councilman failed to define "cooperation," it was not too difficult to understand it had something to do

with the county relaxing its legal grasp on Owens Valley groundwater.

After Wickser's letter made the rounds of the supervisors' eyes, one of them, Johnny Johnson, objected to laying open all the county's plans to the enemy camp. He said he doesn't "want to make waves" that might upset the council's approval of the leases.

County Administrator John K. Smith said the county should mail copies of their plans to DWP, LA Mayor Bradley, and to the council. The board agreed.

Ever since the DWP lost its case with the state supreme court, it has assumed, in effect, the position of a small child slapped away from the dinner table - to use the expression of one county official - and some board members see the airport demand as another "pout" from the city council.

RESOLUTION REQUESTS LAND SALE FOR LONE PINE'S "DEVELOPMENT"

At the same meeting, the supervisors approved a resolution that puts DWP on the spot in its much-touted offer to sell off some of its properties to local private interests. Supervisor Richard McDonald asks in his resolution that DWP "work with representatives from the town of Lone Pine towards selling property that will work as an economic stimulus to the town of Lone Pine and assist the town in constructively planning its future."

McDonald said he will be talking to the local merchants and citizens to get support for the request, but whether DWP will take seriously the request, or give it much more than a lip-service response, remains to be seen.

eastern sierra news service

INYO COUNTY

INDEPENDENCE, CALIFORNIA

878-2381

NEWS-LETTER

JOHN HESTON • BENETT KESSLER

"May the news in your day be good news every day"

TIME TO SUBSCRIBE

US POSTAGE PAID
BULK RATE
Independence, Cal.
Permit #6
93526

To: Buck Gibbons
District Attorney's Office
Courthouse; Drawer D
Local